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REPORT

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES • SPRING 1993

Pawtucket Decides to Close Slater Park Zoo

The Slater Park Zoo, a small municipal zoo in Pawtucket, R.I., is scheduled to close on July 1, 1993. Having changed little since its opening in 1957, the zoo has been criticized as outmoded and inhumane.

In February 1991, The HSUS began receiving letters from Rhode Island constituents who complained of the zoo's conditions. That April the Pawtucket-based environmental group Save the Park, in a formal appeal to HSUS Chief Executive John A. Hoyt, requested HSUS involvement. The NERO contacted the City of

Pawtucket officials and offered assistance in addressing the zoo's problems.

NERO Program Coordinator Frank Riabudo investigated conditions at the zoo and—with the assistance of John W. Grandy, Ph.D., HSUS vice president, Wildlife and Habitat Protection, and Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., HSUS vice president, Field Services—prepared an evaluation that was submitted to the Pawtucket Recreation Committee.

The HSUS believes that wild animals *continued on page 2*

INSIDE

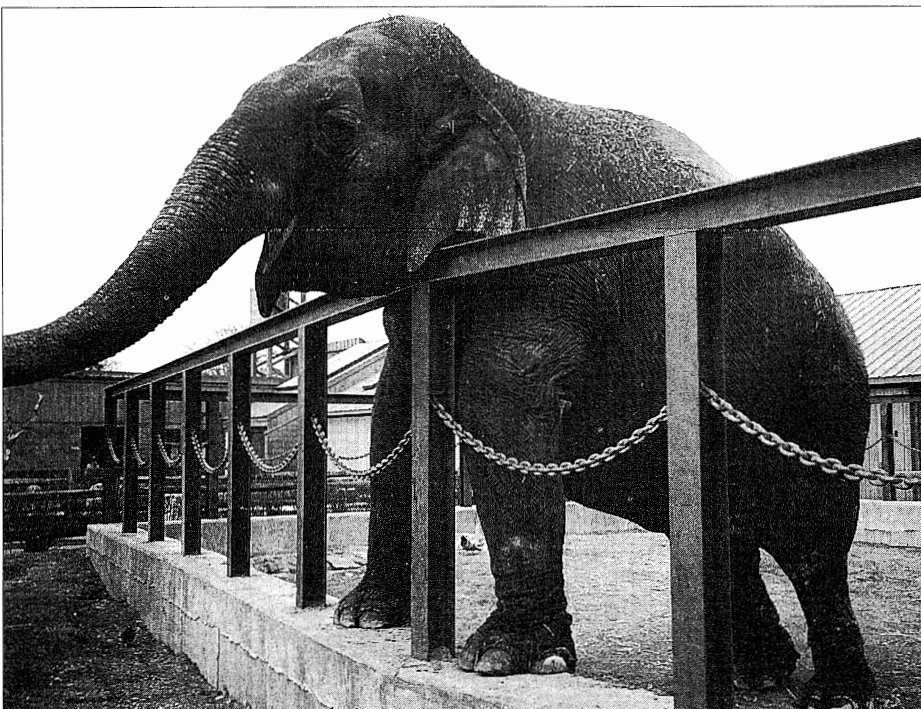
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Baer Joins Task Force on Hunting Safety

Late last fall, while hunting where it is legally allowed, a man accidentally shot and killed Kevin Elliot of Morris, Conn. Elliot had been jogging near a town reservoir. The incident caused a public outcry and ensuing controversy over the need for stronger hunting regulations.

In response, Connecticut Gov. Lowell Weicker created a special task force on hunting and public safety. NERO Director Arnold Baer was appointed to the group. The task force, which includes hunters as well as nonhunters, is charged with examining the safety of hunting as practiced in Connecticut. The task force is not to consider whether hunting should be abolished but whether it can be made safer.

Over the past few months, the task force has held a public hearing and conducted a number of open meetings. The group will present its findings to the gov- *continued on page 3*



Forty-eight-year-old Fanny will soon leave the Slater Park Zoo for a new home where she can socialize with other elephants. Pawtucket officials decided to close the zoo once it became clear that adequate funding was not available for needed improvements.



John W. Grandy inspects the small outdoor elephant enclosure at Slater Park. Grandy was part of the HSUS zoo-evaluation team that submitted a report to the Pawtucket Recreation Committee. The report described four possible options for the zoo's future.

Slater Park Zoo

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should ordinarily be permitted to exist undisturbed in their natural environments and that, to a considerable extent, zoos violate that right. However, since Pawtucket was assessing the zoo's future, the HSUS report outlined the zoo's possible policy options: (1) maintain present conditions (unacceptable to The HSUS), (2) bring the zoo up to professional standards that meet or exceed those of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria and The HSUS, (3) convert the zoo to a less ambitious facility, such as a nature center or children's zoo, or (4) relocate the animals and convert the zoo to a non-animal-oriented recreational facility, such as a playground or recreation center (favored by The HSUS). After many months of working with city officials and animal-protection and environmental groups, it became clear that the city could not provide adequate funding to improve the zoo as needed.

On January 20, 1993, the city council voted overwhelmingly to close the zoo and find new homes for all the animals. A few weeks later, the mayor's office concurred. "This has been the most tedious and involved issue I have ever worked on in

my eight years with The HSUS," said Ribaud. "It doesn't matter how we got to this point, but only that we've arrived. Now our real work has begun."

Ribaud was recently appointed to a relocation committee established by the city administration. The committee will seek suitable homes for all of Slater Park's 62 domestic and exotic animals. Three Himalayan bears, three spider monkeys, and a 48-year-old Asian elephant named Fanny will be the most challenging to relocate. Nevertheless, we are optimistic that happier circumstances await all of Slater Park's animals and confident that relocation efforts will succeed. ■

Thank You!

The NERO wishes to thank the Pawtucket, R.I., city council and Mayor Robert E. Metivier for their decision to close the Slater Park Zoo.

Special thanks go to the many animal-protection and environmental groups that worked so hard to resolve this issue. Finally, we thank our Rhode Island members and constituents for their many phone calls and well-directed letters of support for our position. ■

Green Mountain Dog Race Track To Close

On December 31, 1992, the Green Mountain Dog Race Track, citing financial difficulties, announced that it would cease operation. The racetrack has operated in Pownal, Vt., for 29 years.

Jessica Bart-Mikionis, director of the Bennington County Humane Society, said, "There have been numerous problems with the quality of care [given] to some of the greyhounds kenneled at the facility."

Action taken by the humane society—coupled with pressure from local activists and such Vermont groups as Save the Greyhound Dogs, Greyhound Rescue, and Facing Animal Concerns Today contributed to the track's demise. Green Mountain's closing means the end of greyhound racing in Vermont. The NERO will work with the Vermont Humane Federation and the above-mentioned groups to ensure that this so-called sport does not return.

The HSUS opposes dog racing because of its cruel training methods, the large-scale breeding of greyhounds in the hopes of producing a winner, the often cruel methods by which nonwinners are sometimes killed, and because it is an inhumane and unjustified exploitation of animals for profit. ■



The Green Mountain Dog Race Track operated in Pownal, Vt., for 29 years prior to the announcement of its closing.

Opposition Causes Withdrawal Of Dog Track Proposal

Last fall NERO Program Coordinator Frank Ribaud met with private individuals and representatives of animal-protection groups in Old Orchard Beach, Me. The citizens were concerned about a proposal, by a Boston-based syndicate, to convert the town's empty baseball park into a greyhound racetrack.

Town officials contacted the NERO for information about greyhound racing. As was mentioned in our report on the Green Mountain Dog Race Track on page 2, The HSUS opposes dog racing. The practice involves cruel training methods, large-

scale breeding (and inevitable destruction) of greyhounds in hopes of producing winners, and often-cruel methods of killing nonwinners.

Just before Ribaud was scheduled to address the issue at a public hearing in Old Orchard Beach, the dog-racing proposal was withdrawn due to strong opposition.

Dog racing is currently illegal in Maine. As a result of the Old Orchard Beach incident, a coalition of animal-protection groups, breed clubs, and concerned citizens has been formed to help guarantee that dog racing stays out of the state. ■

Certificate of Appreciation Given to Mary Mushinsky

In a recent ceremony, NERO Director Arnold Baer presented Connecticut State Rep. Mary Mushinsky with an HSUS certificate of appreciation.

During her 12 years in the Connecticut House of Representatives, Mushinsky has championed animals, sponsoring sound animal-protection and environmental legislation. She has worked tirelessly to effect important bills ranging from mandatory rabies inoculations for cats to allowing elderly citizens to keep pets in public housing.

In a significant victory for animals, Mushinsky successfully sponsored a 1992 act providing for low-cost spaying/neutering of dogs and cats adopted from public shelters. By helping to control pet overpopulation, the legislation helps reduce euthanasia rates and aids in protecting the public and animals against the spread of rabies.

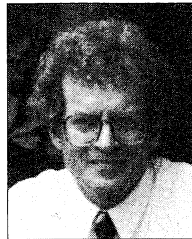
Baer expressed appreciation for Mushinsky's co-chairing of the Connecticut Legislature's Environ-

ment Committee and her current role in house leadership. "Representative Mushinsky's dedication to the humane ethic is a longstanding one, as exemplified by her winning the Shaw Scholarship in 1969." (The NERO annually awards this scholarship, now named the Shaw-Worth Scholarship, to a Connecticut high school senior who exemplifies compassion for animals.) Baer added that Mushinsky has shown "devotion to environmental concerns and the people of Connecticut" as well as sustained dedication to animal protection. ■



Arnold Baer presents Rep. Mary Mushinsky (holding her son) with an HSUS certificate of appreciation for her sponsorship of important animal-protection and environmental legislation.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENT



By Arnold Baer

People. . . . Now there's a clever way to start a column on animals, but people are on my mind tonight.

The New England region is very fortunate in having people of the highest caliber working for animal protection. No doubt, my counterparts in the other nine HSUS regional offices feel the same way about the individuals and organizations with whom they work on a daily basis. Nonetheless, I think New England is very special.

Why? Well, I won't name names since I'd undoubtedly leave some individual or organization out, but I will say that New England boasts a long, strong history of animal-protection activism. Some of the oldest and most sophisticated humane societies and SPCAs can be found in this region. They have many progressive programs. In addition to the larger organizations and shelters, a wide variety of individuals and smaller organizations effectively work at rescuing and sheltering animals. They also engage in far-reaching legislative, investigative, and educational efforts.

I marvel at the commitment, know-how, creativity, and energy of so many, who often work without compensation. Whether in legislative group meetings, shelter-oriented seminars, joint investigations, or one-to-one encounters, those who share in our work continually move ahead, often despite institutional and social obstacles.

Such people make our job easier, and a lot more rewarding. Most important, those of you who work so hard make a tremendous difference for animals. Many thanks to you from the NERO staff and all of our New England members. ■

Task Force

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error and then to the legislature, where a number of bills on the issue are pending.

Although each side of the issue is being forced to compromise, we believe the hunting community is being sent an important message: substantive changes are needed to ensure the safety of Connecticut's citizens. ■

AROUND THE REGION

■ **VERMONT**—The Vermont Coalition for Animal Legislation, of which NERO is a founding member, is backing legislation requiring rabies inoculation of cats as well as legislation providing for student choice concerning dissection. The group is also aggressively opposing a moose hunt sought by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

■ **NEW HAMPSHIRE**—NERO recently sent New Hampshire HSUS members an Action Alert urging their support for legislation, proposed by the New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations (NHFHO), to establish a low-cost spay/neuter program. The NHFHO may also propose a mandatory spay/neuter bill.

■ **MASSACHUSETTS**—Undaunted by a governor's veto last session, the Carriage Horse Action Committee and other groups in a legislative coalition continue to work for passage of comprehensive regulations for the carriage-horse industry. Also, a humane trapping bill has been reintroduced.

■ **MAINE**—Last year the Maine Federation of Humane Societies successfully lobbied for improvements in the state government's approach to animal control. The Non-hunter Rights Alliance is working in support of legislation to increase public safety during hunting season.

■ **CONNECTICUT**—Bills aimed at more comprehensive animal-protection laws and safer hunting practices (see p. 1) will receive great attention this session.

■ **RHODE ISLAND**—Last year Gov. Bruce Sundlun signed two bills backed by The HSUS and other animal-protection groups. Transporting any animal outside a vehicle's enclosed portion without proper and safe restraint is now illegal. Another law has established a Rabies Control Board, composed of seven members with varied backgrounds, including animal protection.

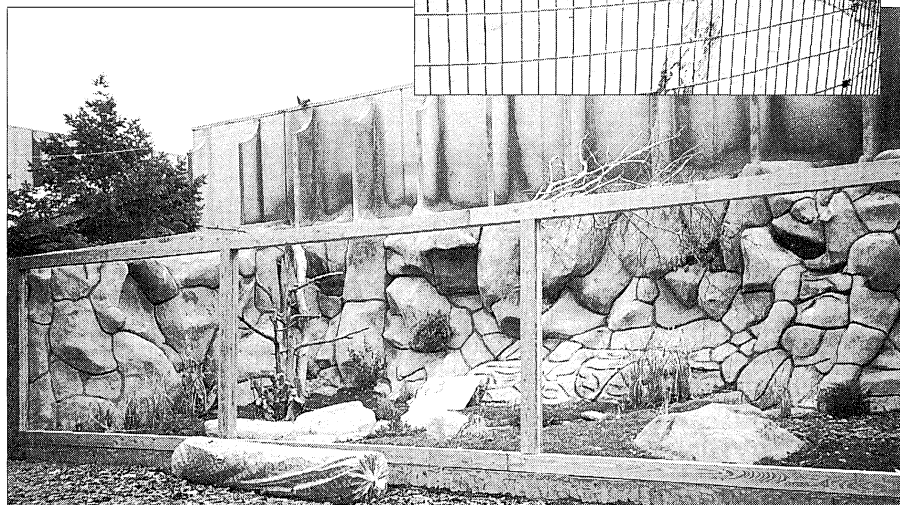
These successes derive from a strong effort by the Rhode Island Legislative Animal Action Coalition (RILAAC). This year RILAAC is introducing a bill requiring spaying/neutering of dogs and cats adopted from public or private shelters. The group is also supporting a bill designed to tighten regulations on bringing exotic and other non-domestic animals into the state. ■

Aqua Circus Emphasizes Environmental Awareness

With the help of the NERO and Massachusetts animal-protection groups, Cape Cod's Aqua Circus continues to improve and will now emphasize education and environmental awareness rather than entertainment. The park has hired an education coordinator and is developing a theme of indigenous Massachusetts wildlife.

"Dixie," a 19-year-old Atlantic bottle-nose dolphin who had been at Aqua Circus since 1977 and was the facility's only dolphin, was found

dead in her tank on February 27, 1993. Preliminary reports indicate the cause of death was age-related disease. Director Dennis Markham said Aqua Circus has no plans to acquire another dolphin. ■



The new red fox natural habitat enclosure reflects the Aqua Circus's philosophy of displaying animals in natural settings far better than did the old caging (inset).

Reflect for a moment . . .

How can I help animals even when I no longer share their world?

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you're gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

Please send will information to:

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.